Philanthropy in Canada

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Produced by Randall Anthony Communications with the Association of Fundraising Professionals Canada. The Globe's Editorial Department was not involved.

Economic uncertainty puts pressure on charities – support is vital

AFP Canada continues to push for a permanent charitable sector secretariat

In Canada's charitable sector, the negative impacts of turbulent, external forces have a disturbing way of repeating themselves.

In the current context, global economic and political upheaval has stirred uncertainties that risk causing donors to curtail their charitable giving. The result: Canadian charities that serve as lifelines for vulnerable individuals and communities are facing the prospect of funding shortfalls.

It's a similar situation to the challenges that confronted the charitable sector during the COVID-19 pandemic when demand for services surged while funding dwindled – and not much has changed since then.

Funding is still declining while demand for services has continued to rise.

A 2023 poll by Ipsos for CanadaHelps, Canada's largest platform for donating and fundraising online, showed that, compared to 2022, Canadians are more likely to say they do not give financially to charities and less likely to say they will give the same amount this year as 2022.

Top left: Nancy Perry Dossous, treasurer of AFP Canada, says although many nonprofits are facing funding constraints, "this is the moment for philanthropy to rise, not retreat." Top right: Niambi Martin-John, chair-elect of the AFP Foundation for Philanthropy – Canada, says reduced funding for the nonprofit sector could exacerbate health inequities and diminish crucial psychosocial support for marginalized groups. SUPPLIED

The poll also showed 24 per cent of Canadians (up from 22 per cent in 2022) said they expected to need support from charitable services within the following six months to meet essential needs such as food, shelter or health services – 42 per cent of whom were under the age of 35.

Nancy Perry Dossous, treasurer of AFP Canada, says the charitable sector is "in a pressure cooker.

"Inflation, geopolitical turbulence and widening social fractures are colliding. Meanwhile, the nonprofit sector is expected to carry on as if it's business as usual," she says.

Ms. Perry Dossous notes that the nonprofit sector contributes over

See PRESSURE on page AFP4

ABOUT THE ASSOCIATION OF FUNDRAISING PROFESSIONALS

The Association of Fundraising Professionals (AFP) represents 26,000 fundraisers around the globe, partnering with donors and volunteers to change the world through ethical and effective fundraising. AFP helps its members raise over $100-billion annually for a wide variety of causes by providing advocacy, research, education, mentoring and the most rigorous code of ethics in the profession.

The over 3,000 AFP members in Canada are leaders in the charitable sector – a sector that contributes more than 8 per cent to Canada's GDP annually. They raise funds for organizations large and small, in rural and remote communities as well as towns and major cities across the country. They support arts, culture, shelters, emergency services, health care, education, reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples, and social justice. Their fundraising efforts change lives by helping fight poverty, hunger, climate change and inequalities in Canada and around the world.

INSIDE

Capitalize for Kids Crisis in youth mental health. **AFP 2**

Royal Ontario Museum Major gift support's ROM's strategic vision. **AFP 3**

Canuck Place Studying pain in non-verbal children. **AFP 5**

The Kidney Foundation Community champions fight kidney disease. **AFP 6**

Terry Fox Foundation From bench to bedside. **AFP 7**

Mercy Ships Floating hospitals bring hope and healing. **AFP 8**

ADRA Canada Focus on community-led initiatives. **AFP 9**

OPERATION EYESIGHT TACKLES THE ROOT CAUSES OF VISION LOSS

Every dollar counts in the battle against avoidable blindness

Founded in Calgary more than 60 years ago with just $840 in funding, today Operation Eyesight is a global leader in international development and affordable eye health care – and every dollar still counts – now more than ever.

"It's really important that people understand the impact of their dollar and how it supports the sight-saving work that we do," says Myrna Linder, Operation Eyesight's director of fund development.

"Eyecare is more than just vision, it's more than just seeing. We're looking at the root causes of vision loss that are connected to poverty, education, good health and well-being, gender equality and clean water and sanitation," says Ms. Linder.

"There are 1.1 billion people around the world living with vision loss, and what's unfortunate is that 90 per cent of all vision loss is preventable and treatable," she adds.

Left: For years, Hayat, an 11-year-old first-grade student from Ethiopia, could not see clearly at a distance. In grade one, she struggled in school and her parents feared for her education. When Partners in Education Ethiopia, collaborating with Operation Eyesight, visited her school, she received an eye exam, a diagnosis of refractive error and prescription eyeglasses. Now she is working on her studies and has hope for her education. Hayat is one of 288,198 students Operation Eyesight and its partners screened in 2024, and one of 2,869 students who received eyeglasses. Right: A community health worker in Zambia screens students during a school eye health program. In 2024, Operation Eyesight and its partners screened more than 2,360,895 people and dispensed 272,911 eyeglasses. Globally, 1.1 billion people live with vision loss; 90 per cent is avoidable. OPERATION EYESIGHT

While vision loss impacts people of all ages, many only require an eye exam and prescription glasses at a cost of $20 to enable them to unlock opportunities in education and employment and to become independent. For others it may mean access to cataract surgery or treatment for trachoma (a blinding eye disease).

Operation Eyesight's goal is to create avoidable blindness-free villages in the 10 countries in Africa and South Asia where the organization works with communities, hospitals and governments to prevent blindness and restore sight.

"We have a secret sauce," says Ms. Linder. "We work in a unique way. Our goal is to build sustainable solutions for communities.

"This involves our teams on the ground visiting villages, training community health workers to do eye and health screening, and ensuring there are facilities where people can be referred. This creates a ripple effect in the demand and supply of eye health care," she says.

"If these facilities don't exist, we create them with donor funding and train in-country experts," says Ms. Linder. "We're there for the long haul. We make a lasting difference in a community before we move on to the next community."

"At Operation Eyesight we value all donations, from individual gifts that can fund a cataract surgery ($75) to major donors and institutional giving that can support training and help build infrastructure," she adds.

"We have a really good retention rate for donors, but we need new donors, we need to expand our donor base," she says. "We're always looking at options: how to make giving easier for individuals and really making sure that our donors know that every dollar counts."

Learn more:
operationeyesight.com/give

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General Internal Medicine
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Child and youth mental health system is in crisis

Capitalize for Kids seeks more funding to transform the system

As the crisis in youth mental health continues to escalate, Capitalize for Kids, a charity focused on amplifying and accelerating the work of community child and youth mental health providers in Canada, is launching a fundraising campaign to elevate the system with new models of care, increased access and updated technology to help kids and their families access vital care.

"Children and youth are in crisis, families are in crisis, and youth mental health counsellors are also in crisis," says Angela Simo Brown, president and CEO at the Canadian charity, who notes the current fragmented system is unable to handle increasing demand.

Ms. Simo Brown says while helplines and hospitals perform key roles, many people are unaware of how community mental health services operate in the mental health system.

While there are thousands of community mental health agencies in Canada that support children, youth and their families, many of them are not adequately funded and are using outdated technology.

"Capitalize for Kids identified this gap years ago and realized that we could help these community mental health agencies increase their capacity by bringing system efficiencies that are critical to reducing wait lists, tackling gaps in care and driving innovation for better outcomes through leveraging pro bono consulting expertise from top-tier management consulting firms," she says. Capitalize for Kids is the only charity in Canada that focuses on providing expert pro bono consulting services in combination with funding to create a better mental health system for kids and their families, she adds.

The consultants have an important role, because often clinicians themselves don't have the time, energy or funding to introduce improvements that have been tested and proven in other regions, says Ms. Simo Brown.

With Capitalize for Kids, solutions are not limited to one hospital, agency or hotline. Capitalize for Kids is building a better mental health system and has already positively impacted more than 1.1 million children, youth and families, bringing efficiencies and innovation to over 75 agencies in 19 regions, showing proven success in transforming a fragmented and challenged system, she says.

A therapist in discussion with a youth: One of Capitalize for Kids' initiatives is Measurement-Based Care, a program that uses standardized questionnaires to empower youth in their own treatment plan. SUPPLIED

One of the charity's 25 current initiatives is to help mental health agencies implement Measurement-Based Care (MBC), a proven data-driven progress measurement system for improved treatment effectiveness. MBC promotes the regular use of standardized questionnaires to track improvements and feedback, empowering youth in their own treatment plan. Without MBC, clinicians rely on general observations instead of real-time data to track progress and adjust treatment. MBC also increases youth involvement and engagement in their mental health journey.

Ms. Simo Brown says evidence suggests MBC can improve clinical symptoms by more than 40 per cent and increase the likelihood of reliable change by 3.5 times versus current programs.

In partnership with CAMH Cundill Centre for Child and Youth Depression, Capitalize for Kids' vision is to lay the groundwork for MBC to become a standard of care in child and youth mental health across Canada.

To address the increasing demand for Capitalize for Kids' services and to set the organization up for future growth, the charity is aiming to raise $10-million a year, says Ted Garrard, past CEO of SickKids Foundation and founder of West Shore Consulting Inc.

Reflecting on the origins of the organization, Mr. Garrard notes Capitalize for Kids was initially funded by an investor conference organized by the charity's founders Kyle MacDonald and Jeff Gallant. The ongoing annual event continues to yield revenue for the charity.

"What we're really looking to do is to complement our fundraising activities so that in the next five years we can become a $10-million a year fundraising organization," says Mr. Garrard, who adds the goal is ambitious but achievable.

"We need to ensure that we can deliver the kind of quality solutions that our beneficiaries and partners are looking for. We're reaching out to individuals, family foundations and the wealth that exists among individual Canadians to take on this issue," he says.

Ms. Simo Brown's call for donor support is clear: "Help Capitalize for Kids help mental health providers help more kids and families."

Learn more: capitalizeforkids.org

GIVING EVERY STUDENT A CHANCE TO SUCCEED

The Ignite Durham Learning Foundation's Make A Difference Depot in Oshawa provides brand new items and food for students during their time of need. IDLF

As Durham continues to grow rapidly, its diverse population brings with it both incredible strengths and tough challenges with one in four children in the Ontario community living in a food insecure household.

"Education is often called the great equalizer, but when students are hungry, lack warm clothing or don't have access to essential resources, it's difficult for them to fully engage in their learning journey," says Stacey Lepine-Fisher, executive director of Ignite Durham Learning Foundation (IDLF), a charity committed to ensuring every student has a fair chance to succeed.

"We believe no student should have to choose between meeting their basic needs and staying in school," she says, noting IDLF works with school educators and leaders, as well as community partners who hold relationships with children, youth and families.

"IDLF steps in during a student's time of need so they can focus on their education and reach their full potential," says Ms. Lepine-Fisher.

"We look forward to support from donors to enable us to create brighter futures for Durham's children and youth while also strengthening the fabric of the local community," adds Ms. Lepine-Fisher.

Learn more: ignitedurhamlearningfoundation.ddsb.ca

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$30-million gift secures ROM as a cultural cornerstone

Temerty Foundation confirms its legacy as a visionary force for civic progress

A transformative endowment of $30-million from the Temerty Foundation to the Royal Ontario Museum (ROM) will fund a set of initiatives aimed at broadening ROM's reach and ensuring it serves as an even more open and welcoming cultural hub for all visitors.

The gift has established the Temerty Community Access and Engagement Fund with a multifaceted vision focusing on three key pillars: enhancing accessibility through free admission opportunities, enriching the visitor experience with dynamic new programs, and ensuring the museum remains relevant and adaptable for future generations.

A tangible outcome will be the return of ROM's popular Free Main Floor program. First piloted in the summers of 2022, 2023 and 2024, the initiative offers complimentary access to the museum's extensive main floor galleries.

Left: ROM is a landmark and cultural destination in the heart of Toronto. Right: The Temerty Foundation's gift will enhance access through free admission opportunities, fund new programs, and ensure ROM remains relevant and adaptable in the future. SUPPLIED

The gift will also help support other key access initiatives, including ROM's free admission on Canada Day and the Third Tuesday Nights Free program, presented by TD Bank Group, through its corporate citizenship platform, the TD Ready Commitment, and bolster the ROM Community Access Network (ROM-CAN), a vital program that provides free museum access to a range of community groups, from Indigenous youth to Canadian newcomers.

"Through the Temerty Foundation's extraordinary support, ROM continues to strengthen community and provide a landmark destination for all to gather, connect and be inspired," says Josh Basseches, ROM director and CEO. "This funding increases public access, and enables special programs, live performances and hands-on activities, making ROM an even greater cultural anchor and gathering place for Ontarians."

Ontario's Minister of Tourism, Culture and Gaming, Stan Cho, echoed this sentiment.

"Thanks to the extraordinary generosity of the Temerty Foundation, ROM will be able to expand both its programs and its reach, thereby strengthening the museum's role as a vibrant civic hub. Private-sector support such as this is crucial to supporting the continued innovation and long-term growth of Ontario's arts and culture sector," says Mr. Cho.

James Temerty says the foundation's commitment emphasizes the importance of cultural institutions in a changing world.

"A future filled with change calls for a strong cultural infrastructure," he says. "Institutions like ROM will be more important than ever in bringing people together and championing curiosity, learning and innovation, and we are delighted to play a role in making the museum more accessible and engaging for all."

Louise Temerty adds that the gift was driven by "our strong belief in the power of these shared experiences to shape and inspire Canadian society, now and for generations to come."

Janice Price, president and CEO of the ROM Foundation, says the Temerty Foundation has once again confirmed its legacy as a visionary force for civic progress.

The Temerty Community Access and Engagement Fund marks a significant step forward in ROM's ongoing commitment to accessibility and community engagement, ensuring that its vast collections and enriching experiences are available to a wider and more diverse audience.

The museum anticipates that the enhanced programming and increased access will further solidify its position as a vital cultural cornerstone in Ontario.

Learn more: rom.on.ca

50 YEARS OF EMPOWERING CHILD AMPUTEES ACROSS CANADA

Young amputee embodies legacy of The War Amps CHAMP Program

Being a part of The War Amps Child Amputee (CHAMP) Program, now in its 50th year, is something Kendra Harper, 28, cherishes.

Born without her left arm below the elbow, Ms. Harper was enrolled in CHAMP when she was just shy of two years old. As a 'Champ,' she received financial assistance for artificial limbs, including those for activities like swimming and dancing, and received life-changing peer support through the program, particularly at CHAMP seminars.

"CHAMP provides opportunities for amputees and those with limb differences to share, connect and laugh together. From big topics like driving and shoe-tying to how to hold a burger with one hand, this is what CHAMP seminars are all about," says Ms. Harper, now an elementary school teacher in her home province of British Columbia.

"Every seminar brings new learning as we enter new seasons of our lives. I wouldn't be half the teacher, leader and human I am today without The War Amps and the CHAMP Program. My world has opened up because of my amputation, and it has given me an edge in everything I do."

From left: (Now) Kendra Harper gives the keynote speech at the 2025 CHAMP Seminar in Vancouver; (Then) Ms. Harper holds War Amps key tags at a CHAMP Seminar in 2008. SUPPLIED

Ms. Harper experienced a full-circle moment at the recent 2025 CHAMP Seminar in Vancouver, where she gave the keynote speech to an audience of Champs and their families. Cathy Blakely, Ms. Harper's mom, has fond memories of attending the seminars with her daughter over the years and watching her interact with other amputees.

"We leave these seminars feeling so inspired and so very lucky to be a part of this wonderful group of people. What an amazing support system," says Ms. Blakely.

The CHAMP Program was created in 1975 by war amputee veterans who recognized their knowledge and experience could benefit children across Canada who were living with an amputation.

CHAMP serves children under 18 who are born with a limb difference or who have lost a limb due to an accident or medical causes. The legacy of "amputees helping amputees" remains a hallmark of the program, as regional seminars and other CHAMP events are often the first occasions where child amputees and their families meet other amputees and parents who have "been there."

The War Amps does not receive government grants. Its programs are made possible through the public's support of the Key Tag Service.

Learn more: waramps.ca
or call toll-free 1-800-250-3030

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Capitalize for Kids is a charitable organization dedicated to creating a powerful mental health system in Canada, so children, youth and families can access vital mental health support.
Learn more at CapitalizeforKIDS.org

FROM PAGE 1

Pressure: Surge in demand for charitable services

$225.5-billion to Canada's economy and employs more than 2 million people, positioning it as a "societal stabilizer.

"The charitable sector isn't a footnote to the economy; it's foundational to its function and recovery," she adds.

Niambi Martin-John, chair-elect of the AFP Foundation for Philanthropy – Canada, says many organizations are facing declining donations and an over-reliance on long-term supporters.

"Since COVID, even loyal donors are beginning to make smaller gifts, which ultimately affects the bottom line," she says.

She adds that there is a trend of donors delaying contributions or redirecting support to causes they perceive as more immediately urgent. For example, some foundations are strategically reassessing their portfolios, often shifting towards thematic areas with a greater local focus, further complicating the landscape for Canadian charities seeking multi-year funding.

The consequences of these funding constraints are far-reaching.

"Critical support for vulnerable communities will be scaled back, with some community-led organizations grappling with whether they are able to sustain operations," says Ms. Martin-John.

She emphasizes that charities often serve as vital hubs for community connection and, particularly in rural areas, act as extensions of formal health-care and social systems. Reduced funding could therefore exacerbate health inequities and diminish crucial psychosocial support for marginalized groups, including women and girls, aging populations, 2SLGBTQIA+ individuals and racialized communities.

Both Ms. Martin-John and Ms. Perry Dossous anticipate a surge in demand for charitable services mirroring the experience of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Ms. Martin-John points to recent announcements of rising grocery prices as an indicator that more people will be turning to food banks. Ms. Perry Dossous agrees, noting that the current increase in need is compounded by its complexity, encompassing issues like food insecurity, unaffordable housing, youth mental health and rising demand for emergency services.

The impact of international policy shifts, particularly funding cuts in the U.S. for programs supporting initiatives such as Pride, DEI, and HIV prevention and treatment, especially in Africa, adds another layer of concern.

Ms. Martin-John stresses the importance of global solidarity, noting that many of the same human rights issues being challenged abroad also affect vulnerable populations in Canada.

In the face of these challenges, both Ms. Martin-John and Ms. Perry Dossous urge donors to maintain and even increase support for the charitable sector.

Ms. Perry Dossous says there is a need for "critical thinking in philanthropy" and urges donors to consider where their capital is going.

Ms. Martin-John says the charitable sector simply cannot afford to lose momentum with its donors and supporters, noting that the importance of global solidarity that emerged during the pandemic is a lesson that should not be forgotten now.

Ms. Perry Dossous agrees.

"This is the moment for philanthropy to rise, not retreat," she says.

Both also highlight AFP Canada's key advocacy role to ensure the charitable sector is included in government assistance programs to offset the impact of U.S. tariffs.

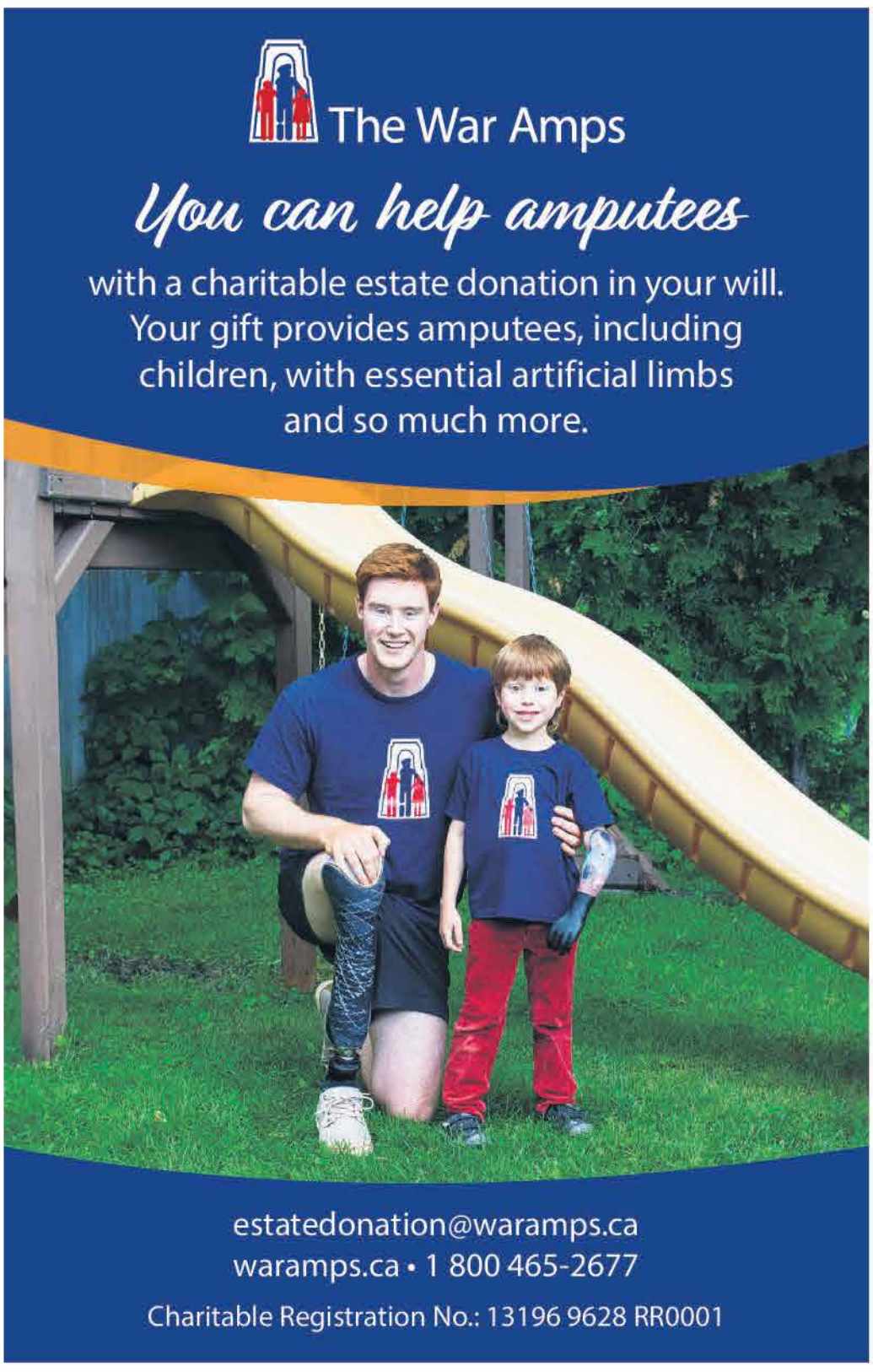
AFP Canada is continuing to push for a permanent charitable sector secretariat to serve as a crucial advocate and bridge between charities and the federal government.

"With the increasing complexity of trade relations with the U.S., concerns about inflation and affordability, (a secretariat) would empower charities to continue their vital work while also addressing the broader economic and social challenges and ripple effects posed by these new tariffs," AFP Canada stated in a pre-Budget 2025 submission.

The submission noted that charities are under greater pressure than ever before.

"Our experience from the pandemic shows that a stronger partnership between the sector and government could have reduced these impacts and accelerated recovery, ensuring the sector's long-term success. Establishing a dedicated government secretariat could help achieve this goal," the submission stated.

Canadian charities are at a critical juncture. Sustained and increased support from individual donors and a commitment to flexible, community-driven funding are essential to ensure these vital organizations can continue their invaluable work during these uncertain times.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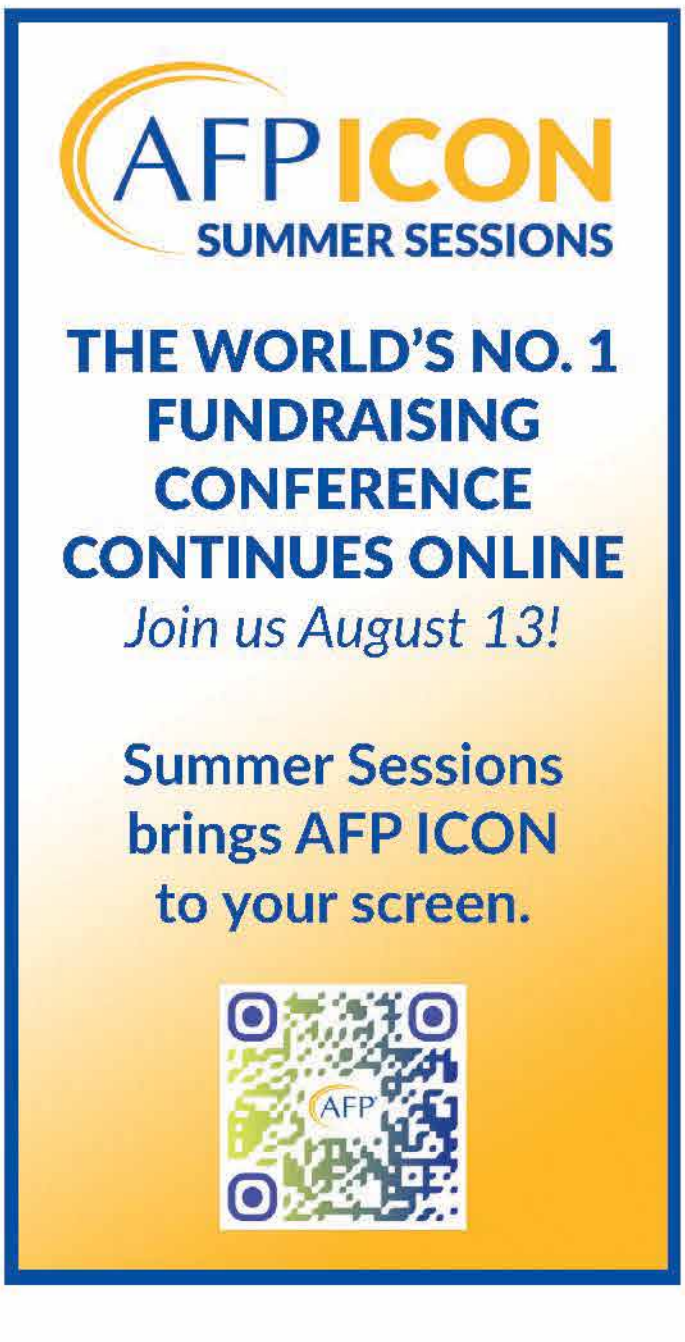
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From left: Laesa Kim and Candice Barrans (right) are parent partners in the Canuck Place Children's Hospice Research Initiative (CPCH RI) team. Dr. Hal Siden, the scientific director at CPCH RI. A key focus of the initiative is understanding and addressing the complex needs of non-verbal children. SUPPLIED

Where does it hurt? Canuck Place Children's Hospice Research Initiative studies pain in children

Research process engages family partners as co-creators of knowledge

Children can be expressive, especially when they are in pain. But when non-verbal children with serious illness are experiencing pain, how do parents, caregivers and clinicians know where it hurts?

That is what the Canuck Place Children's Hospice Research Initiative (CPCH RI) in Vancouver is trying to determine – through the novel lens of patient-family research faculty.

The Pain and Irritability of Unknown Origin (PIUO) study is one of many projects being undertaken by CPCH RI, which was established in 2023. Funded by the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) as part of the CHILD-BRIGHT Network, it aims to develop evidence-based guidelines for managing these difficult-to-assess symptoms often found in pediatric palliative care.

Dr. Hal Siden, the scientific director at CPCH RI, says the conditions and care for children and families, as well as the trajectory of illnesses, are unique.

He notes that while the field of pediatric palliative care has grown significantly since its early days as a 'cottage industry,' dedicated research support remains limited globally, with perhaps only a dozen centres having fully committed research teams.

A key focus of the CPCH RI is understanding and addressing the complex needs of non-verbal children.

"How do you interpret pain signals? Are they just angry? Are they irritated? Are they bored? Or does something truly hurt?" says Dr. Siden, underscoring the difficulties in assessing their symptoms.

Dr. Siden's lab is pioneering a model of patient-oriented research that engages family partners – parents and caregivers of children with life-threatening illnesses not only as participants, but as co-creators of knowledge. Their lived experience having children with complex medical needs helps guide research priorities, shapes study design, improves recruitment and accessibility, and brings meaning to data interpretation.

CPCH RI prioritizes the meaningful involvement of families in the research process by integrating families into the initiative. Two parent partners, Candice Barrans and Laesa Kim, are team members of CPCH RI.

Ms. Barrans plays a key role in bridging the gap between academic research and the everyday realities of families. She also co-leads parent journal clubs that demystify complex academic findings, providing accessible resources and fostering deeper understanding.

"The 'demystifying' we offer parents is more about providing them with access to resources they may not otherwise be able to view, or even if they could, may be overwhelmed by the volume of information, or get lost in the medical or academic language," says Ms. Barrans.

These journal clubs create a unique space where parents are recognized as knowledgeable collaborators, drawing on their extensive experience within the medical system.

The value of this collaborative approach is evident in the CPCH RI's research digest. Parent-authored commentaries on academic literature have become the most read publications, demonstrating the profound impact and value placed on family perspectives within the pediatric palliative care community.

Ms. Barrans says this fulfills a crucial need for parents to use a difficult experience to better the system for other families and make impactful change.

As a CPCH RI family liaison, Ms. Kim aims to ensure that research is not only informed by but also driven by the realities faced by Canuck Place families.

She consults on study questions, design and recruitment, consistently advocating for the patient and family perspective. Her contributions extend to co-investigating studies and leading interviews, bringing a unique lens to data interpretation.

"When I've interviewed families, for example, I can nod along with their experience and genuinely say, 'I get that,'" says Ms. Kim, emphasizing the rapport and richer data that this shared understanding can foster.

Ms. Kim is also instrumental in shaping the implementation of the PIUO study, a crucial step in translating research findings into tangible improvements in community clinics.

A key element of this work is the Parent Monitoring Board, comprised of parents who participated in the initial phase of the PIUO study. Their insights are invaluable in guiding how the new pain pathway will impact patients and families.

Ms. Kim highlights the profound sense of helplessness that families often experience when dealing with PIUO.

"These families want their child's struggles – and their own – validated and understood, and to work with their health-care teams as partners," she says.

The PIUO study aims to empower community pediatricians with the tools and support needed to navigate this challenging journey alongside families.

"Ensuring our community pediatricians across B.C. are trained and supported in caring for various complex conditions, such as PIUO, is an essential step in improving equitable health care in our province," says Ms. Kim.

A great step, with support and leadership from patient-partner researchers.

Learn more: canuckplace.org

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Thanks to a **transformational $30-million endowment gift from the Temerty Foundation**, the Royal Ontario Museum is expanding its role as Canada's most dynamic and welcoming museum—today and for generations to come.

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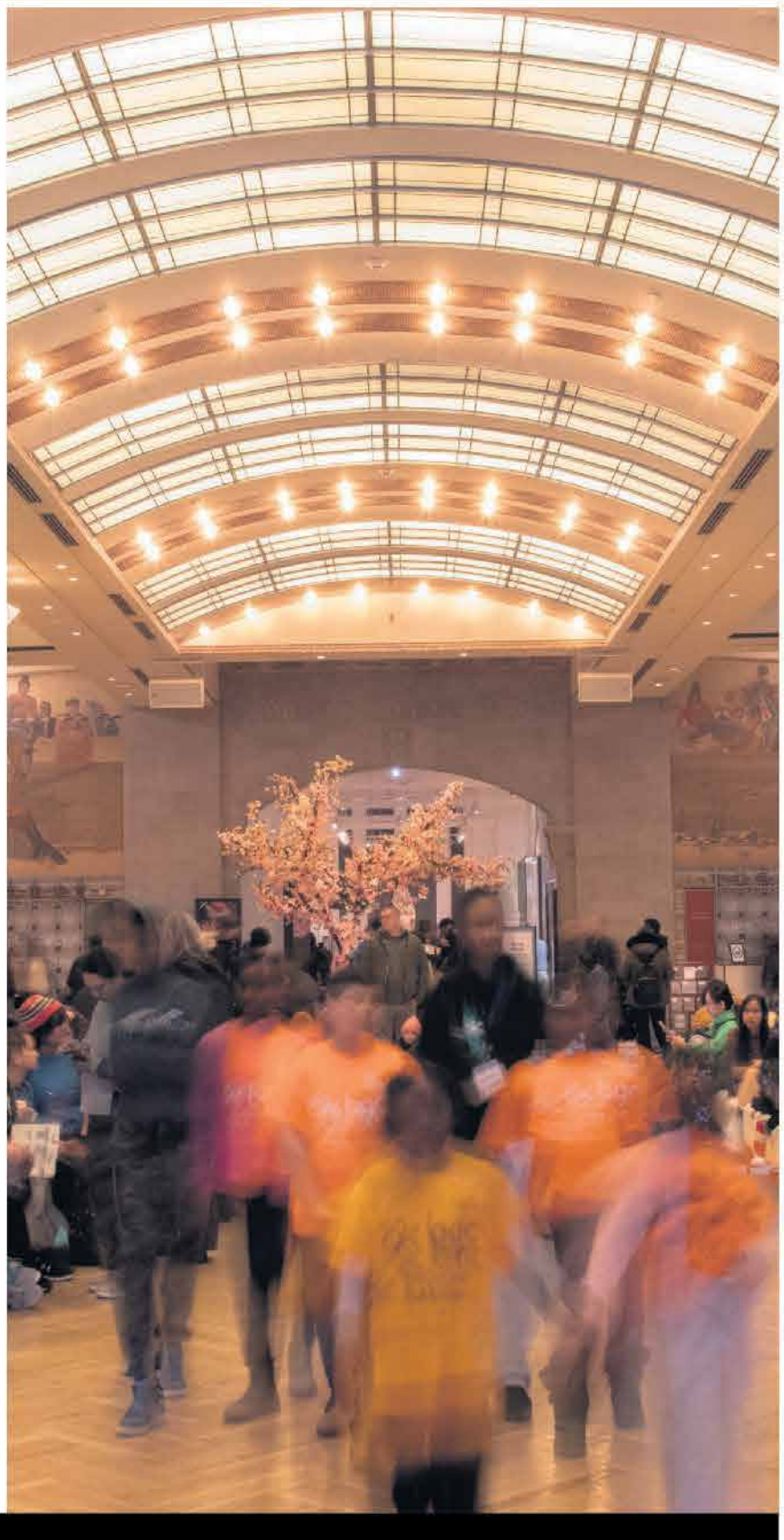

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ROM

An unwavering commitment to fight kidney disease

Working to expand awareness and improve access to information

Toronto couple Bobby and Vinny Maker are more than just donors to The Kidney Foundation of Canada; they are deeply embedded community champions who have become vital change agents in the fight against kidney disease.

Their sustained commitment to The Kidney Foundation, marked by grassroots involvement and a profound personal connection, recently earned them the prestigious Fund Development Impact Award, a testament to their dedication.

The Kidney Foundation supports research focused on improving outcomes for people living with kidney disease.

The Makers' journey took root in 2011, following the passing of Mr. Maker's father, who had endured eight challenging years on dialysis due to kidney disease and diabetes. This deep, personal loss became a catalyst for the family, sparking a profound commitment not only to support The Kidney Foundation financially but also to champion greater awareness and advocate for improved outcomes for those affected. In the years since, this legacy of compassion and service has been embraced by the next generation, as sons Karan and Charan have joined their parents in continuing the family's philanthropic mission.

"We were not too aware of what to do, where to go," recalls Mr. Maker. "But when (my father) passed away we started getting involved more with the foundation and understanding what it was all about."

This understanding quickly translated into action, as the Makers recognized a significant gap in knowledge within their own community.

"We realized our South Asian community really doesn't have the know-how [to access support for kidney disease]," says Mr. Maker, which led to the couple's efforts to bridge the information gap through culturally sensitive outreach.

Mrs. Maker, who personally administered her father-in-law's home peritoneal dialysis for several years, witnessed first-hand the impact of kidney disease on both patients and their families.

"So that's why we wanted to do something to contribute towards the cause," she says.

The Makers' involvement goes beyond mere financial contributions. They regularly participate in The Kidney Foundation events, actively raising awareness and sharing their personal story. They have also used their own businesses, including Mr. Maker's role as president of Cellular Point and Value Mobile, to host fundraising events and integrate the foundation's message into the company's corporate culture.

The couple also actively participate in community festivals like Diwali and Vaisakhi, using these platforms to educate the community; are members of Markham Mantra Lions Club, fundraising for The Kidney Foundation; and they support camp experiences supported by The Kidney Foundation, including those for children and adults affected by kidney disease.

Bobby and Vinny Maker are community champions who are raising awareness and sharing their personal story as they support the battle against kidney disease. SUPPLIED

Their impact is further evidenced by their involvement in initiatives like the SUGARNSALT Project, a groundbreaking research collaboration between The Kidney Foundation's End Diabetic Kidney Disease campaign and the Canadian Institutes of Health Research to explore SGLT2 inhibitors to prevent kidney failure in individuals with type 1 diabetes.

This pioneering research is addressing a significant gap in current medical treatments, as existing therapies primarily focus on managing insulin levels and blood pressure, while largely overlooking the kidney complications often faced by people with type 1 diabetes.

While acknowledging the importance of medical research and treatment options, the Makers emphasize an equally urgent need: expanding awareness and improving access to vital information – especially within vulnerable and underserved communities.

They champion practical, inclusive solutions, calling for more printed materials in multiple languages and community-based information sessions designed to reach those who may be disconnected from digital platforms.

Their message to fellow philanthropists and community members resonates with clarity and purpose: every form of involvement matters.

"It is not only about dollars," says Mrs. Maker. "We all have resources, whether it's time or money. We can contribute in our own way just by volunteering."

The Makers' unwavering commitment is more than a gesture – it is a rallying cry. A call to stand alongside The Kidney Foundation of Canada in pursuit of a future where kidney health is a reality for all.

Learn more: kidney.ca

WHAT YOU GET WHEN YOU GIVE

Canadian Blood Services sets goal to recruit one million new donors

As demand in Canada's health-care system intensifies, Canadian Blood Services (CBS) has set its most ambitious recruitment goal ever – adding one million new donors in the next five years.

A not-for-profit charitable organization, Canadian Blood Services says the need for new blood, plasma, stem cell and organ donors has never been greater.

"There's been a shift in demand for blood and plasma products internationally and within Canada, yet as of today only 2 per cent of all eligible people in Canada are donating," says Dr. Graham Sher, CEO at Canadian Blood Services.

"There's a disconnect here, and it isn't sustainable for the future needs of the health system. To get where we need to be, we've set an ambitious recruitment goal of one million new donors. Achieving that goal will take collective action – but at a time of growing national pride, Canada's Lifeline [the biological life-saving connection between donors and patients] stands as a powerful reminder of what's possible when Canadians support one another."

In a recent survey, Canadian Blood Services found that nearly three-quarters of Canadians (71 per cent) said donating blood or plasma was one of the most meaningful ways people can give back to their community, and yet this is not translating into action.

Advancements in clinical care and a growing and aging population means the pressure will continue to grow. Demand for blood in Canada is projected to increase by nearly 10 per cent over the next five years, while the demand for immunoglobulins, medicine made from plasma, could grow by 50 per cent or more.

As demand in Canada's health-care system intensifies, the need for new blood, plasma, stem cell and organ donors has never been greater. BERITK VIA GETTY IMAGES

To motivate a new generation of donors, Canadian Blood Services is launching a new platform, which asks the question, Who's Saving Who?

"We've never set a recruitment goal like this before. To attract this many new donors, we need to tell a different story. We know that without the donor, there's no Lifeline. Who's Saving Who tells the untold story of what you get when you give," says Ron Vezina, VP, donor engagement at CBS.

"At a time when so many of us are searching for ways to be part of something that matters, donating is one of the most meaningful ways to find connection. Now is the time for all who are eligible to move off the sidelines and experience what you get when you give."

Learn more: blood.ca

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Canuck Place provides pediatric palliative care for over 920 children with complex life-threatening illnesses and the families who love them.
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CHILDREN'S HOSPICE

Could these tiny particles be a light at the end of the tunnel for cancer patients?

For most scientists, there's nothing like that elusive 'aha' moment of discovery. For Dr. Gang Zheng, now the associate research director at the Princess Margaret Cancer Centre in Toronto, that moment came in 2011. He unexpectedly discovered a new class of tiny particles that could harness the power of light to improve how cancers are diagnosed and treated.

He called these nanoparticles porphysomes and has been working to perfect them ever since.

"I knew it was a gamechanger right away," he remembers. So did the scientific community. When the research was published in the respected peer-reviewed journal Nature Materials, it was cited as one of the top 10 cancer breakthroughs of 2011.

Fast-forward to 2025. After years of tweaking and testing, Dr. Zheng and his team are set to start the first human clinical trials with porphysomes next month. It's more than an 'aha' moment. It's a giant leap forward for Dr. Zheng and project co-leads Drs. Jonathan Irish and Brian C. Wilson – and potentially for cancer patients across Canada and beyond.

Dr. Gang Zheng (centre) and project co-leads and Drs. Brian C. Wilson (left) and Jonathan Irish in their Finish It T-shirts created by the Terry Fox Foundation to commemorate the 45th anniversary of the Marathon of Hope. SUPPLIED

THE LONG ROAD FROM BENCH TO BEDSIDE

The path to discovery is rarely direct. It takes years for breakthroughs in the lab to benefit patients in the clinic.

Porphysomes are a powerful example of what we can achieve when we support brilliant scientists with sustained funding and a long-range vision. Porphysomes are natural, non-toxic particles that respond to light and oxygen. When injected into the body, they accumulate in cancer cells and can be used to target and kill those cells.

Using multiple imaging techniques, such as a PET scan or a fluorescence camera, clinicians can see the porphysomes within the tumours. These images can help guide surgeons to a tumour that might otherwise be missed. Porphysome-laden tumours can also be destroyed with heat or light, typically delivered via a laser. And oncologists can use these tiny assistants to track residual cancer cells in the body after surgery.

Dr. Zheng recognized their potential immediately. And in 2013, the research team applied for and received a Terry Fox New Frontiers Program Project Grant from the Terry Fox Research Institute (TFRI). In the years since, the team has continued to unlock the potential of porphysomes with the support of TFRI and donors to the Terry Fox Foundation.

"Sustained funding has enabled this entire bench-to-bedside journey," says Dr. Zheng. In all, the team has received three multi-year grants from TFRI totalling nearly $15-million – a very rare achievement. Their most recent grant secures their funding until 2029.

RIGOROUS REVIEW PROCESS

Demand for TFRI funds is intense, and applicants' proposals are subject to a rigorous review process conducted by an international panel of referees. When Drs. Wilson and Zheng received the first TFRI award, it became a proof-point for other funding organizations, enabling the team to secure even more financial support.

Dr. Zheng points out that many awards don't support research that falls into 'the gap' between discoveries. But that's often the staging area for the next breakthrough. "TFRI doesn't follow trends, they create them. And they believed in our vision," he says.

What's the team's end goal? They've already demonstrated that porphysomes can target cancer cells in experimental models of gynecological, head and neck, pancreas, lung, brain, prostate and colorectal cancers. "With our most recent award, we're looking at how porphysomes might be used to 'hijack' the body's own immune system to potentially limit the spread of the disease."

It's incredible to realize that this transformative 13-year project started with an idea, with TFRI's big picture perspective and with the support of donors to the Terry Fox Foundation.

"It's a pure Canadian discovery," says Dr. Zheng with pride.

Learn more: terryfox.org; tfri.ca

REMEMBRANCE IS A YEAR-ROUND RESPONSIBILITY

On November 11, at 11 a.m. Canadians pause to Remember the legacy of the country's Veterans, including those who served in conflicts beyond the First and Second World Wars.

But Remembrance is not confined to one day a year, it is a year-round responsibility, says Cynthia Ngarachu, the Legion National Foundation's director of development.

"It's a mindset and a responsibility that we all share as citizens and as Canadians, so we want people to join us in Remembering and supporting Veterans every day of the year," she says. That support can take many forms, including charitable giving.

The Legion National Foundation works to preserve the legacy and memory of Canadian Veterans, and as fewer Canadians today have direct personal connections to wartime experiences, the Foundation's role is critical in sharing Veterans' stories, values and sacrifices to ensure they are not forgotten, says Ms. Ngarachu.

The Foundation has several outreach programs to maintain the legacy of Veterans, including initiatives such the National Youth Remembrance Contests. With the support of The Royal Canadian Legion, this contest reaches more than 100,000 students annually. The students are invited to share what Remembrance means to them through poetry, essays and posters plus a new category, video, for aspiring young filmmakers.

Nancy Ge is First Place Senior Winner, Black and White Poster – The Legion National Foundation National Youth Remembrance Contests. SUPPLIED

The Foundation also provides opportunities for Canadians to visit significant historical sites in France and Belgium where they get to walk in the footsteps of soldiers who fought in the World Wars.

But the Foundation's role extends beyond looking back, it also supports Veterans and their families through health and wellness programs, as well as housing assistance.

"We support Veterans and their families because service doesn't touch just the soldier or the person serving overseas, it also touches the family who make huge sacrifices," she says.

Learn more: lnfcanada.ca

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Floating hospitals bring hope and healing to Africa's coastlines

Mercy Ships is poised to expand its impact with plans for a new hospital ship

In countries where access to timely and quality surgical care remains a critical challenge, a unique organization is making waves – quite literally. Mercy Ships operates state-of-the-art hospital ships that sail directly to African countries, providing free surgeries and serving as vital education platforms to strengthen local health-care systems for the long term.

With over 50 per cent of the world's population residing within 100 kilometres of a coast, hospital ships offer a strategic solution to reach underserved communities. Recognizing that poor infrastructure can hinder patients from accessing their floating hospitals, Mercy Ships also supports patients and their caregivers with the logistics of travelling from their homes to the vessel.

Mercy Ships has two hospital ships, Global Mercy and Africa Mercy. These ships are currently serving the people of Sierra Leone and Madagascar. MERCY SHIPS

The impact of Mercy Ships is transformative in regions grappling with a shortage of doctors, specialists and essential medical equipment, coupled with financial and geographical barriers to care. The organization's two fully equipped floating medical facilities adhere to stringent safety standards similar to leading health-care centres in developed countries, ensuring patients receive the highest quality treatment.

Beyond immediate care, Mercy Ships prioritizes empowering local health-care professionals through education and training programs, fostering sustainable improvements that extend far beyond the ships' departures.

Currently, the organization's two vessels, the Global Mercy and the Africa Mercy, are serving the people of Sierra Leone and Madagascar, respectively. Both ships offer a range of free surgeries, including maxillofacial reconstructions, burn contracture releases, pediatric orthopedic corrections, cleft lip and palate repairs, ophthalmology and dental services. They also provide crucial educational opportunities for the nations' health-care professionals.

Darryl Anderson, executive director of Mercy Ships Canada, emphasizes the organization's collaborative approach.

"Mercy Ships International makes decisions about where to go on a twofold approach. First, we consider requests from governments to come in, so we don't go anywhere where we're not invited," he says. "We actually sign a protocol agreement with different governments, deciding what type of work the organization will be doing when we go. And so we work really closely with national governments to address the surgical requests that they have for the country."

Operating the floating hospitals presents a unique set of challenges, says Mr. Anderson.

"In order for a ship to come in, we need to have a place where we can dock. We need water and we need a berth that we can use for 10 to 11 months of the year," he says, emphasizing the logistical complexities of their long-term port stays.

Mr. Anderson adds that efforts are made to reach patients beyond the immediate port area.

"We have screening teams that work with local health-care providers and others where we also provide the logistics of bringing people and their caregivers – most often family members – to the ship," he says.

The organization relies heavily on the dedication of volunteers from around the globe.

"In a typical year, Mercy Ships will have volunteers from 40 to 50 nations around the world," says Mr. Anderson.

The volunteers include medical professionals, management personnel, IT specialists and tradespeople who contribute their skills to every aspect of the ship's operations.

Looking to the future, Mercy Ships is poised to expand its impact. A groundbreaking agreement with Mediterranean Shipping Company Group (MSC Group) – the world's largest shipping line – and Mediterranean Shipping Company Foundation (MSC Foundation) will facilitate the construction of a new, purpose-built hospital ship.

"Last year, MSC Foundation announced an anchor gift for the construction of a sister ship for the Global Mercy," says Mr. Anderson.

The new vessel will feature enhanced training spaces and the capacity to accommodate approximately 600 crew and patients and their caregivers.

For over 45 years, Mercy Ships has been a beacon of hope, performing over 119,400 surgeries, conducting more than 547,600 dental procedures and training more than 55,800 health-care professionals. As they continue their missions in Africa, their dedication to providing free health care and empowering local communities offers a compelling model for global health initiatives.

Learn more: mercyships.ca

FUNDING CHANGE IN CANADIAN ANIMAL WELFARE INITIATIVES

For six decades, the Animal Welfare Foundation of Canada (AWFC) has served as a national animal aid multiplier, directing donations toward effective animal welfare initiatives nationwide.

Founded in 1965, today AWFC is governed by a volunteer board with expertise in veterinary medicine, animal welfare science, law, public policy, communications and the human-animal bond.

"Our grants fund some of Canada's most urgently needed work across companion, farmed and wild animal welfare," says AWFC board president Giuliana Miguel-Pacheco, adding projects range from front-line care to scientific research, public education and capacity-building.

Recent examples include the Canadian Courage Project (CCP), which expanded its Animal Wellness Booth Program to support youth with pets experiencing homelessness. Two new booths were launched at Toronto shelters, stocked quarterly with essential pet wellness items and veterinary-approved educational materials, offering a lifeline during critical transitions to independent living.

The National Wildlife Centre (NWC) also expanded its veterinary internship and education program. Over a year, three new interns were trained in complex wildlife care, treating over 200 wild patients. The program reached 175 learners virtually and hosted in-person sessions for 30 wildlife biology students. A 24/7 helpline, staffed by NWC veterinarians, provided real-time guidance to rehabilitators across the country.

"Beyond grant-making, AWFC offers donors something just as valuable: peace of mind," says Ms. Miguel-Pacheco. "Many supporters – especially those considering legacy gifts – want assurance that their donations will lead to meaningful, lasting change. Our board applies decades of experience and rigorous standards to ensure that."

After 60 years, AWFC's work continues to grow in reach and relevance. "At our core is a belief in strategic philanthropy – thoughtful, evidence-based giving that leads to real impact," says Ms. Miguel-Pacheco.

Learn more: awfc.ca

AWFC helps a range of initiatives including the Canadian Youth Project that supports youth with pets experiencing homelessness. SUPPLIED

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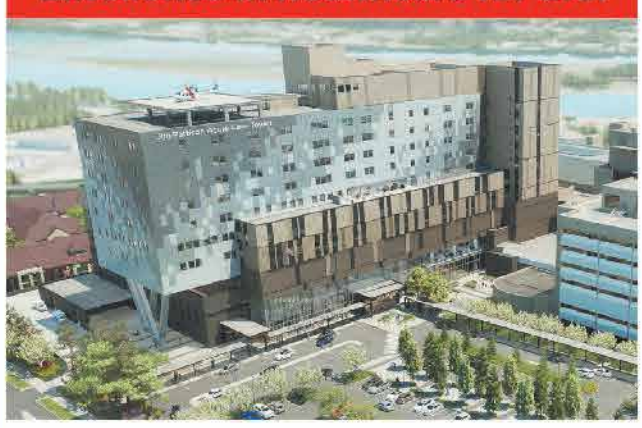

The Jim Pattison Acute Care Tower is getting even closer to opening at Royal Columbian Hospital – and your support has made it happen. Our work doesn't stop when the doors open though. RCH will now have the largest surgical superfloor in Canada, and the Foundation will ensure RCH has the best clinicians, technology, and spaces to provide that essential service.

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WEST PARRY SOUND HEALTH CENTRE FOUNDATION

We're turning 65 — but most babies born with cystic fibrosis today won't reach that milestone.

We have made great progress, but too many lives are still cut short.

With your help, we can change the future.

Donate today.

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Donor support provides stability, dignity and opportunity

School meal program reflects ADRA Canada's focus on community-led initiatives

Left: a staff member at Mamawi Atosketan Native School (MANS) serves a meal to students. Right: ADRA Canada is one of the organizations that supports the meal program at MANS, near Ponoka, Alberta. SUPPLIED

The meal program supported by the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA Canada) at Mamawi Atosketan Native School (MANS) near Ponoka, Alberta, has had a meaningful impact on students, improving their ability to focus and engage in learning, as well as fostering a sense of community and belonging. Beyond just providing meals, the program also incorporates food education, with students growing and cooking their own produce.

The 250-student body at the K-12 school, founded in the mid-1980s with just 20 students, comprises children mostly from Cree Indigenous nations in the area including Samson, Montana, Louis Bull and Ermineskin Cree First Nation communities, says Andrea Lavy, ADRA Canada's regional program manager, Alberta.

ADRA is the humanitarian agency of the Seventh-day Adventist Church that delivers relief and development assistance globally, including in Canada, regardless of ethnicity, political affiliation or religious association.

The meal program was started by school staff who observed students arriving at school without having eaten.

"At first, they noticed it was affecting [the students'] ability to concentrate and engage, so they started offering meals. As the program continued, staff looked for external support in 2000, and ADRA Canada answered the call," says Ms. Lavy.

Today the program is sustained through a collaboration of generous donors including the Winifred Stevens Foundation, ADRA Canada and the Alberta Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

"This is a shared effort to back a school-led initiative that continues to make a meaningful difference in student lives," says Ms. Lavy, adding it is a key part of the school's holistic approach to support students not just academically, but physically and emotionally as well.

Breakfast and lunch are offered to all students, with about 30 per cent of the student body enjoying the meals.

The MANS meal program reflects ADRA Canada's broader focus on community-led initiatives that address real needs, particularly in areas like food insecurity, Indigenous partnerships and emergency preparedness, says Ms. Lavy.

The impacts for the students participating in the program are profound, she says.

"You do see a ripple effect: better learning, better attendance and a stronger sense of being cared for."

The meal program also echoes the core values of ADRA Canada's national work, including dignity, partnership and community-based impact.

Ms. Lavy explains ADRA Canada's national program has five pillars: food insecurity, migration, psychosocial support, emergency preparedness capacity and partnerships with Indigenous communities, with more than 60 per cent of the over 100 projects across Canada responding to food insecurity.

The generosity of everyday Canadians fuels much of ADRA Canada's work.

"Philanthropy is what allows us to do that [work] effectively. It helps us fill critical funding gaps and respond to needs quickly. At MANS, donor support doesn't just provide food. It also provides stability, dignity and opportunity. And that's all the result of something simple like giving towards a school meal," she says, noting every contribution counts no matter the size – it becomes part of a broader effort.

Ms. Lavy believes programs like the one at MANS work best when they are shaped by the communities themselves.

"That's really our philosophy. At MANS, the school is leading the way. They understand their students' needs, and that's how we approach our national work. Not by stepping in with all the answers, but by listening, supporting and building something lasting together with the community and with other partners," she says.

Learn more: adra.ca

NEW JIM PATTISON ACUTE CARE TOWER

OPENING EARLY 2026

From its humble beginnings in 1862, with just 30 beds and one doctor, Royal Columbian Hospital (RCH) in New Westminster grew to become British Columbia's indispensable leader in critical care, serving close to two million residents.

Today, with one of the most ambitious hospital redevelopments in Canadian history, Royal Columbian is poised to play an even more robust role. Critical care will be revolutionized when the new Jim Pattison Acute Care Tower opens in early 2026 – when the multi-year project is complete, RCH will more than double its square footage and increase capacity for an additional 11,300 patients a year.

More than a third of British Columbians rely on Royal Columbian Hospital for critical care. STEFANAMER VIA GETTY IMAGES

Royal Columbian Hospital Foundation is dedicated to advancing health-care excellence at RCH and beyond.

Learn more: rchfoundation.com

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Terry Fox started a marathon against cancer.
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TERRY FOX RUN | SEPTEMBER 14, 2025
Scan to register or visit terryfox.org

Researching the impact of healthier habits

Exploring how lifestyle changes can reduce the severity of some conditions and lower hospitalizations

A $1.5-million donation by the Lister-Rundle Family Foundation has kick-started a research project in Ontario's West Parry Sound that could serve as a countrywide model and encourage more philanthropic support for community-based health-care initiatives.

The Lister-Rundle Family Foundation, established by Dr. Margaret (Molly) Rundle after a 30-year career as a family physician and her husband, businessman Stephen Lister, is the founding donor of West Parry Sound Health Centre Foundation's (WPSHCF) Community Health Research Fund. This research fund is supporting a program that is exploring how lifestyle changes can help reduce the severity of some conditions – like diabetes and high blood pressure – and lower hospitalizations.

Dr. Rundle says community health research grounded in smaller communities like Parry Sound is critical to developing strategies for better health outcomes for many Canadians who have conditions like diabetes and high blood pressure and who live outside major urban centres. She also believes she and Mr. Lister have a responsibility to give back to the West Parry Sound community.

Left: Dr. Mylene Juneau leads the Complete Lifestyle Intervention Program – Ontario. Right: The Lister-Rundle Family Foundation, established by Dr. Margaret (Molly) Rundle and Stephen Lister, supports health research in West Parry Sound. SUPPLIED

"Stephen and I have a deep sense of gratitude for having the privilege of being able to cottage in such a beautiful area. We encourage others to inquire how they may help out, be it for equipment needs or special initiatives like this, to help ensure excellent care is there when needed. For our family, investing in this prevention and wellness program may help to contribute to a stronger, healthier future for everyone who calls this area home."

The WPSHCF supports the work of the West Parry Sound Health Centre, the hospital in Parry Sound that delivers essential health care to the diverse population that swells from 21,000 to over 121,000 during peak summer months.

This donation will help fund the Complete Lifestyle Intervention Program – Ontario (CLIP-ON), led by Dr. Mylene Juneau. CLIP-ON helps people in the rural area learn and adopt healthier habits through a 22-week program that includes personalized support from a range of medical professionals. "The bigger picture is that if our health-care system is going to remain public and accessible to everybody, we really have to up the quotient of preventative and wellness initiatives like this in communities that really need it, like the Parry Sound community," says Mr. Lister.

"As donors, we support projects where we can have a meaningful and significant impact," says Dr. Rundle. "We decide on gifts from our foundation as a family, and we understand how this project will help people improve their health, enjoy life more and hopefully avoid hospitalization as they age," she says.

"As a physician, Molly's been such a passionate advocate of promoting wellness and preventative health care for her patients over so many years that this [project] resonated with us as something that's really important for the community," says Mr. Lister.

Learn more: wpshcf.com

MONTREAL DAFFODIL BALL REACHES A MILESTONE

The Montreal Daffodil Ball, Quebec's largest cancer-related fundraiser, achieved an extraordinary milestone this year raising $3,413,908 to fund support programs and research projects aimed at preventing cancer and improving screening, diagnosis and treatment.

More than 700 guests, including business, cultural and philanthropic leaders, attended the ball this year. Since 2004, this event has raised nearly $48-million to fund research projects in Quebec and bring hope to people living with cancer.

"I want to extend my heartfelt thanks to all our donors and partners for their unwavering support of this important event. Together, we raised funds to ensure that the brightest ideas in cancer research in Quebec are given every chance to succeed – and reach the people who need them most. Your generosity will help us accelerate progress in cancer research, improve treatments and save lives," said Andrea Seale, CEO of the Canadian Cancer Society (CCS).

The Daffodil Ball was supported by four co-chairs, Isabelle Marcoux (Transcontinental Inc.), Nicolas Marcoux (PwC Canada), Michael Sabia (Hydro-Québec) and Kim Thomassin (Caisse de dépôt et placement du Québec). More than 200 volunteers and suppliers – as well as the masters of ceremony Marie-Ève Janvier and Claudia Marques – all contributed to make the ball a success.

Celebrating the record amount raised at the Montreal Daffodil Ball this year (from left): Andrea Seale, Canadian Cancer Society; Isabelle Marcoux, Transcontinental Inc.; Nicolas Marcoux, PwC Canada; Christian Dubé, Quebec's Minister of Health; Marie-Annick Lépine, who performed at the event; Michael Sabia, Hydro-Québec; Kim Thomassin, CDPQ; and Nadia Wendowsky, Canadian Cancer Society. CNW GROUP/CANADIAN CANCER SOCIETY (NATIONAL OFFICE)

"Through strategic partnerships with world-renowned institutions across the province, we are amplifying our impact. Together, we are shaping the future of cancer research by investing in the country's most promising projects," said Nadia Wendowsky, the CCS's VP of leadership and corporate giving.

The next edition of the Canadian Cancer Society's Montreal Daffodil Ball will be held on April 30, 2026.

Learn more: daffodilball.ca

Transforming Lives

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